EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

Overview

The Office of University Publications uses Associated Press style and strongly recommends that all colleges and schools, and particularly our clients, rely on it as an essential tool. Our office works with dozens of units at the university on many types of publications. Using a consistent style, along with clear and concise writing, is more efficient, produces more readable copy and strengthens the university's messages.

Most entries in this university stylebook are specific to the University of Maryland; others are reminders of AP style regarding common errors. This document, however, generally seeks to avoid repeating information available in *The Associated Press Stylebook*. Specific entries in *The Associated Press Stylebook* or this guide supersede those in other reference books, such as *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

For answers to concerns not addressed here, please contact University Editor Lauren Brown at lbrown12@umd.edu or 301.405.4612.

Another resource is the Grammar Hotline, offered by the Department of English Writing Center. It can be reached during normal business hours at 301.405.3787.

academic departments: Capitalize the formal name of a college, department, division or unit: School of Public Policy, Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Department of Entomology, etc. Lowercase in an informal usage, such as the entomology department.
academic disciplines: Lowercase, such as ethnic studies, astronomy and history, except when the study discipline includes words that are normally capitalized: Jewish studies.
acronyms: Avoid whenever possible. When necessary, set off with parentheses: the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Also, do not include an acronym on first reference if it is the only reference to the agency or group in the article. Some acronyms, such as FBI, are acceptable in all instances. Consult the AP stylebook for details.
alma mater: Lowercase. It also requires an article, such as our.
alumnus: The singular form for a man who has attended a school. The plural is alumni. Alumna is the singular for a woman who has attended a school. The plural is alumnae. Use alumni as the plural when referring to both men and women.
alumni association: Lowercase, unless using the full name, the University of Maryland Alumni Association.

board of trustees or board of directors: Lowercase.

business names: Inc., LLC and Ltd. are usually unnecessary. When they are used, do not include a comma before them. Abbreviate corporation and company as Corp. and Co., respectively, when used as part of a firm's name.

civil rights: Lowercase, along with civil rights era and civil rights movement.

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center: On second reference, it may be shortened to the Clarice Smith Center, not CSPAC.

class years: Include after the alumnus' name: John T. Consoli '86 takes photographs for the alumni magazine. (Note direction in which apostrophe is facing.) See "degree abbreviations" entry for information on handling advanced degrees.

College Park: Do not use in place of the university's name.

commas: Do not use a serial comma, which is placed before the and, or or nor in a list of three or more items. Note the preceding sentence for an example of university comma usage in a series. If, however, a serial comma would improve clarity in a lengthy or difficult sentence, it can be added.

courses and lectures: Use quotations around course titles, such as "History of the Americas." Capitalize course names and codes, such as History 101. Otherwise, do not capitalize common, nonspecific course subjects: I missed my psychology class and was late for history.

courtesy titles: Avoid Mr., Mrs., Miss and Ms. Use Dr. in first reference only to someone who holds a medical degree, i.e., a dentist, podiatrist or surgeon.

dashes: Do not use spaces on either side of an em dash: This sentence—the one containing the dashes—is used as an example. The en dash is half the length of an em dash and longer than a hyphen. Common uses include: 1990–95, October–November 1994 and 9 a.m.–5 p.m. But: from 1990 to 1995 (not from 1990–1995), from October to November 1994 and between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Do not use spaces around an en dash.

dates: Abbreviate the month when the date is included; in a sentence, put a comma after the year, if it is included.

degree abbreviations: When listing alumni graduate degrees, use the following: B.A. (Bachelor of Arts), B.S. (Bachelor of Science), M.A. (Master of Arts), M.S. (Master of Science), Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy). For those who have earned graduate degrees, list the degree abbreviation and year immediately after the name: Claire Wingfield M.Arch. '06. For multiple advanced degrees, include all abbreviations and years: Jeffrey Yeh M.A. '70, Ph.D. '75 received two degrees from the university.

diamondback terrapin: Lowercase. (see "terrapins" entry).

ellipsis (…): In general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces. The marching band practices … outside the window. At the end of a sentence, use a period (or question mark or exclamation point), then the ellipsis: The marching band is practicing. … It is outside the window. A comma goes before the ellipsis if the sentence needs one there. Do not use ellipses at the beginning or end of a direct quote.

email: Not e-mail. But: e-newsletter and e-book.

emeritus/emerita: A special designation approved by the university. Use emeritus when referring to male professors. Use emerita when referring to female professors

endowed chairs: In most cases, capitalize full name, including discipline, such as the Minta Martin Professor of Engineering. But: the Sergey Brin Chair of mathematics. Consult development officers of professor's school or college to ensure accuracy.

ethnic backgrounds: African American is the preferred term to describe someone of African-American descent. Note that it, along with such common descriptors such as Asian American, is hyphenated when used as an adjective: Asian-American studies.

ex officio: No caps, no hyphen.

faculty: A plural noun. Preferred: faculty members.

first-ever: First says it all; drop ever.

gender-sensitive language: Avoid choosing the pronouns he or she or him or her when referring to a generic group of both genders. Try to use the plural they or them, and be sure to use subject-verb agreement. In addition, adult females should be referred to as women, and adult males should be referred to as men. Do not use terms that are unnecessarily gender-specific, such as policeman; use police officer.

grade point average: Do not hyphenate. Preferred: GPA.

honors classes: Do not capitalize. Use honors biology or honors English. Exceptions: the Honors College and the University Honors program.

initials: Do not put spaces between names of people using multiple initials: J.P. Morgan, J.B. Robb. The exception is for former university president C. D. Mote, Jr.

Internet: Capitalize.

italics: When using italics on a manuscript to be designed by the Office of University Publications, insert a pound sign (#) at the beginning and end of the phrase to alert designers in case italics don't import correctly.

job titles: Capitalize only when using a formal title *before* someone's name. The exception is a line-by-line list.

junior, senior: Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names of people. Do not precede with a comma. The same goes for II, III and IV, etc. The exception is for former university president C. D. Mote, Jr.

living and learning programs: The preferred name for undergraduate living communities. No longer referred to as living-learning programs.

M Square: The former name of the University of Maryland Research Park. It should be identified with this full name.

magazine: Typically not capitalized when used to refer to a particular publication: *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine. Check specific titles online.

MD: Use only in full addresses that include ZIP codes. Md. should be used in any other reference to a location in Maryland: The university created a partnership

with the city of Hyattsville, Md. The exception is Baltimore.

Mtech: The shortened name for the Maryland Technology Enterprise Institute. Do not use MTECH.

national academies: Lowercase except when referring to a specific academy by name.

numbers: Spell out the numbers one through nine, and use numerals for 10 and up. But spell out any number starting a sentence, and use numerals in ages within sentences.

off-site: Hyphenate as an adjective and adverb.

over: Use only to describe location. Use more than when talking about amounts: More than 50 people attended the event.

percent: Spell out the word rather than use %.

Ph.D.: Write out doctorate if the degree is used in a sentence: John Smith received his doctorate in psychology.

professor: Use only when referring to full professors. Other faculty members should be referred to with their proper title: Robin G. Sawyer is an assistant professor and associate chair of the Department of Public and Community Health. As a title, it should be capitalized before the person's name.

programs: Capitalize the names of formal programs: University Honors, College Park Scholars or the Banneker-Key Scholarship Program.

residence hall: The preferred term for a dormitory building.

retired military: Use retired before the rank, not ret. afterward.

service learning: Do not hyphenate unless used as an adjective.

staff: Singular, not plural. Use an article to precede it: The staff is offering a seminar series.

state of Maryland: Do not capitalize state.

states: When a city and state are given together, the states should be abbreviated and set apart with commas: College Park, Md., is the home of the Terrapins. Follow standard state abbreviations as suggested in the AP stylebook. Note that the same rule applies to cities in foreign countries: Kwasi Bosompem founded a school program in Soweto, South Africa, promoting gender equity.

terms of study: A specific semester is capitalized: Fall 2013 or Spring 2014, but remains lowercase if generic: the spring semester.

Terrapins: Capitalize on all references to the university's athletic teams.

time: Do not use capital letters or extraneous zeros: 2 p.m. In addition, 12 a.m. should be referred to as midnight and 12 p.m. as noon whenever possible to avoid confusion.

Theater: Correct when used to refer to the field of study. But the Maryland's school title is School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies.

trademark symbols: Unnecessary. Capitalization implies a name brand.

University of Maryland, College Park: The full, formal name of the university. Note the comma. Do not use an em dash or at. In most cases, use simply the University of Maryland. On subsequent references, use Maryland, UMD or the

university, or Terrapins or Terps in athletic references. Prohibited: U-MD, UMD and U of M. UMCP is allowed only when referring also to the University of Baltimore campus, particularly the MPowering the State initiative, for clarity.

university: Lowercase when referring to the University of Maryland, or any institution. University Libraries: Use the before identifying the University Libraries. Do not use libraries on secondary references.

URLs: Drop the http:// portion of the Web address when www. is already included. In many cases, the www. can be cut as well. If the URL is at the end of a sentence, add a period.

verb tense: Use present tense: The professor says. The exception is when reporting on a one-time event that has ended.

website: But online material is available on the Web.

ZIP code: An acronym for zoning improvement plan, it is uppercase.